bers of Scheduled Tribes for appointments in banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) According to available information, 46245 persons were appointed in various cadres during the last 3 years in nationalised Banks. Of these, the number of Harijans (SCs) and STs was 10042 and 3154 respectively. Since recruitment in banks is not made on the basis of religion, the data relating to Muslims can not be given.

(c) Government have taken various steps for increasing the intake of candidates belonging to SC|ST as well as minority communities including Muslims in Banking services. These steps, *inter-alia*, provide for inclusion of members of minority communities/ SCs and STs in banks for sub-staff and with the Banking Service Recruitment Boards and organisation of pre-recruitment training for such candidates. Besides, relaxation of educational qualification, fixing of lower cut-off points, holding of separate interviews and exemption of payment of fees etc. are also allowed in the case of SC/ST candidates.

Expansion of trade with Arab and West Asian countries

1596. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government have taken to expand trade with Arab and West Asian Countries;

(b) whether any new areas have been identified for the expansion of India's trade with these countries; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) to (c) There are good prospects for increased trade and commercial cooperation between India and countries in the West Asia and North Africa. In the areas of products exports specific possibilities have been identified for increasing exports of engineering goods, chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals, textiles, spices, tea etc. In the areas of projects, possibilities are emerging for civil construction, infrastructure development, Industrial development, consultancy and operation and maintenance contracts. Steps taken to increase trade and commercial cooperation with the West Asian and North African countries include discussions at Government to Government level at the fora of Joint Commissions/ Committees, offers for commercial line of credit to countries like Iraq to facilitate export of specified goods, participation in trade fairs and exhibitions, encouragement to Indian companies to establish direct contacts with their counter-part organisations in these countries etc.

Bomb blast incidents in the country

1597. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of bomb blast incidents and sabotage activities in Delhi and other places in the country from January, 1988 till January, 1989 by the terrorists;

(b) the details of bomb blasts and sabotage activities and the extent of loss of human life and property caused by these blasts and sabotage activities; and

(c) the number of terrorists apprehended in this connection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) In respect of